

**A new minimum, and
zero till incentive
program by the
Illinois Department
of
Agriculture
to help
save
soil
and
oil!**

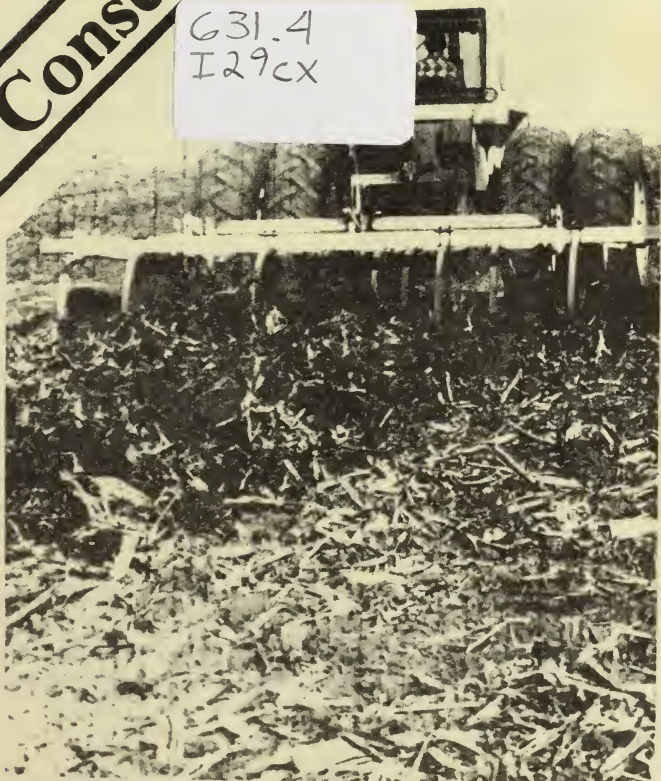
Conservation cost sharing

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The Illinois Cost-Share Program

The Division of Natural Resources (DNR) of the Illinois Department of Agriculture has initiated a cost-share program for soil saving "conservation tillage" practices. Annual funding approved by the Illinois General Assembly is allocated to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) by DNR on a priority basis. However, all funds are administered on the local level by the SWCD's. It is possible to solve our serious erosion problems in Illinois through programs like this. In doing so, we may be able to secure the agricultural resources that have consistently ranked Illinois as a National leader in farm exports.

It's a vital program for both producers and consumers in Illinois.

—The Practices—

The tillage systems eligible for cost-sharing are referred to as reduced tillage systems. These include chisel-plant and disk-plant and zero-tillage. Eligible crop residues are primarily from corn and soybeans, although some SWCD's may vary crop residue options at the local level to include other crops.

These practices are a proved "shot in the arm" for the agricultural economy. They keep soil in place, and diesel fuel in your tank. With proper management, yields can stay the same or increase, giving you higher net returns.

—Why Conservation Tillage in Illinois—

In Illinois we lose 180 million tons of valuable topsoil annually. In the long run this will destroy much of the productivity of Illinois farmlands. This erosion process creates sediments which choke our waterways and lakes. These water resources have lost much of their original purity in Illinois. This loss of quality has been compounded by reduced holding capacity in hundreds of Illinois watersheds. The preservation of our water reservoir is a primary benefit of the program.

This program is designed to provide voluntary incentives for farmers, encouraging them to try conservation tillage on a small acreage. "These systems can work" say many of the operators who have tried.



—Does My Landlord Have to Agree?—

No. Landlords are not required to sign since there are a great number of absentee landlords. The farmer is the only person needed to sign the contract and if he happens to be a tenant for several landlords, only one farm will be eligible for cost-share. A contractor can sign only one contract.

—Where Can I Sign-Up?—

Contact your local SWCD for details. They can determine your eligibility and tell you what payments you can receive for various tillage operations. The SWCD can also help in locating equipment and advising on proper procedures for a successful conservation tillage system.

Contract Pay

Zero-Tillage	
Year of Contract	Into Corn
1st	\$2
2nd	\$1
3rd	\$1

Reduced Tillage System		
Year of Contract	1500 lbs. (45%) ¹	2500 lbs (60%)
1st	\$10	\$10
2nd	\$7	\$10
3rd	\$3	\$5

		Reduced Tillage
Year of Contract	750 lbs. (43%)	1250 lbs (50%)
1st	\$10	\$10
2nd	\$7	\$10
3rd	\$3	\$10

¹Percent figures indicate the amount of surface covered to determine if residue levels have been met.

—Who is Eligible?—

SWCD's have designated local priority areas which are in the most need of erosion control. These areas may be designated geographically or by degree of erosion taking place. The SWCD's encourage farmers with land in these priority areas to come in and talk to them about how the SWCD can help them conserve soil.

Payment Rates

Table I

Large System

Residue Into Bean Residue

\$20

\$13

\$7

Table II

Small System - Corn Residue

53%)	3500 lbs. (77%)	4500 lbs. (85%)
	\$20	\$25
	\$14	\$18
	\$7	\$10

Table III

Large System

56%)	1750 lbs. (66%)	2250 lbs. (74%)
	\$18	\$20
	\$12	\$13
	\$6	\$7

planting time. Percent of surface covered will be calculated

—How is Residue Measured—

—To Determine Compliance?—

SWCD employees and SCS personnel will measure the crop residue after planting has been completed. By use of a 50 foot cord with knots at 6 inch intervals, random samples will indicate the percentage of soil surface protected by crop residue. As shown above, these estimates of cover residue determine payment schedules.

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